From digital literacy to digital citizenship

> **Digital literacy encompasses computer hardware, software, the Internet, cell phones, PDAs, and other digital devices. A person using these skills to interact with society may be called a digital citizen.**

Digital literacy is the ability to locate, organize, understand, evaluate, and create information using digital technology. It involves a working knowledge of current technology and an understanding of how to use it. Digitally literate people typically communicate and work more efficiently, especially with those who possess the same knowledge and skills.

The site www.digitalcitizenship.net is devoted to digital citizenship, a concept that helps teachers, technology leaders, and parents understand what students and technology users should know to use technology appropriately. It is more than just a teaching tool; it is a way to prepare people for a society full of technology. "Too often we are seeing students as well as adults misusing and abusing technology but not sure what to do," wrote founder Mike Ribble. "The issue is more than what the users do not know — it encompasses appropriate technology usage."

In their research, Ribble and Gerald Bailey identified nine elements to help users focus on these issues. These elements go beyond the boundary of just working with technology appropriately — they set the stage for how we work with each other in a global, digital society and create a foundation for helping to educate people on the issues that face them in an increasingly technological world.

The nine elements of digital citizenship

1. **Digital Etiquette:** The standards of conduct expected by other digital technology users. Do users consider others when using digital technologies?
2. **Digital Communication:** Electronic exchange of information. Is there an understanding of the digital communication methods and when they are appropriate?
3. **Digital Literacy:** The capability to use digital technology and to know when and how to use it. Have users taken the time to learn about digital technologies? Do they share that knowledge with others?
4. **Digital Access:** Full electronic participation in society. Can all users participate in a digital society at acceptable levels if they choose?
5. **Digital Commerce:** Electronic buying and selling of goods. Do users have the knowledge and protection to buy and sell in a digital world?
6. **Digital Law:** The legal rights and restrictions governing technology use. Are users aware of laws, rules, and policies that govern the use of digital technologies?

> **Section 9 of the new Nevada Adult Education Professional Development Resource Bank (www.literacynet.org/nevada/nvrb) contains more than 50 resources for teaching and learning about technology.**

7. **Digital Rights & Responsibilities:** The privileges and freedoms extended to all digital technology users and the behavioral expectations that come with them. Are users ready to protect the rights of others to defend their own digital rights?
8. **Digital Health & Wellness:** The elements of physical and psychological well-being related to digital technology use. Do users consider the risks (both physical and psychological) when using digital technologies?
9. **Digital Security (self-protection):** The precautions that all technology users must take to guarantee their personal safety and the security of their networks. Do users take the time to protect their information while creating precautions to protect others' data as well?

Visit www.digitalcitizenship.net for links to pertinent publications and other resources, including 20 pages of activities for training adults.

Opening the door to collaboration with higher ed
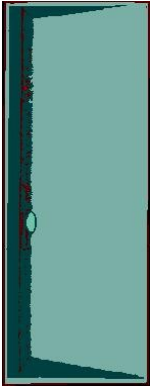
With several federal Initiatives focused on integrated training and transitioning students into postsecondary education and training, the *Adult Learners and State Policy* report is especially timely. The 20-page report, published in February by the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) Association at www.sheeo.org/workfrce/CAEL paper.pdf, addresses the need for states to:

- assess the knowledge and skills of their adult population, and
- develop and implement policies that enable current workers, as well as the next generation, to compete more effectively in the global economy.

The study indicates that adults know they need to learn. Nearly half of the adult population is now participating in formal education, and the trend is rising; more than 20% of the total adult population is involved in work-related learning. However, despite the growth in adult learning, millions of adults who need instruction are not participating. The most obvious gap is in the participation of adults who need to enhance their basic literacy skills. About 40 million adults function at the lowest levels of literacy; only three million of these are receiving instruction. Many other adults need further learning to re-tool for changing jobs, acquire higher level skills, or obtain a credential to aid career advancement and flexibility.

According to the report, to increase the competitiveness of their workforce states should:

- Identify state needs based on the capacities of the workforce, the needs of existing employers, and the needs of employers the state would like to attract;
- Analyze the programs and institutional resources that can serve adult learners, and determine whether state policies and practices promote greater participation and success;
- Set explicit statewide goals and develop statewide strategies for reaching those goals, as well as for monitoring the state's progress; and
- Determine which goals require direct state action and state subsidy, then take action and allocate resources to achieve these goals.

A helpful table describes state policies and practices that discourage and impede adult participation in learning and those that encourage and promote it. Entities that seek to give adults greater economic opportunity and increase the capacity of their workforces can use this continuum for a self-assessment of existing state policies.

For a window into career pathway instructional frameworks, visit http://www.nifl.gov/pd/careerpathways. Part of the LINCS Workforce Competitiveness Resource Collection, the page contains links to materials to help educators develop and implement work-based education programs and career pathways for adult learners in their Adult Basic Education and GED® programs. Industry-specific basic skills topics include:

- Basic Skills and Communication for Construction Workers: Guidelines and Training Materials
- Building Basics: ESOL Toolkit for General Construction, Landscaping, Painting, and Plumbing
- Bridging the Employment Gap: Janitorial
- English in the Workplace for School Custodians
- Hotel T.E.A.C.H. Project Curriculum
- Workplace Health and Safety ESOL Curriculum
- Key Skills in Vocational Areas (hairdressers, wood occupations, retail, travel and hospitality)
- Steps to Employment
- Bridges to Careers for Low-Skilled Adults: A Program Development Guide
- GED Career Bridge to Hospitality Curriculum
- ESOL Customer Service Training Curriculum
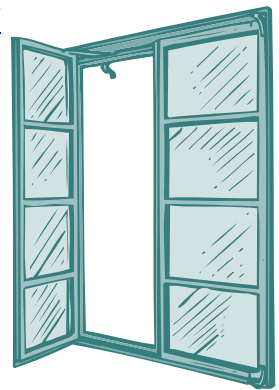
Eighty percent of success is showing up. —Woody Allen

NAE News

An engaged, lively group of NAE members recently participated in the two-part Webinar, "Here Today, Gone Tomorrow: Why Our Students Leave and What We Can Do to Help Them Stay."

The presenter for this professional development opportunity was Dr. Lennox McLendon, Executive Director of NAEPDC, the professional organization for state directors. Dr. McLendon has served adult education for more than 35 years and is a highly regarded national speaker. He is well known in the halls of Congress, where he advocates on behalf of adult education.

This free Webinar is just one example of the benefits of NAE membership! Join or renew by June 30 to take full advantage in 2010-11!

Nevada Adult Educators
www.nvadulted.org

Check out these new movies!

Thanks to Sally Schumacher, site administrator for the ABE program in Winnemucca, for this link to the Adult ESL Training Video Project (http://www.newamericanhorizons.org/). Videos show classes and teachers in action, demonstrating a variety of teaching approaches. The first two videos in the series have been posted:

- "Lesson Planning for Life Skills" guides beginning level learners through highly structured to open-ended activities, showing the progression of a life skills lesson on talking on the telephone.
- "Building Literacy with Adult Emergent Readers" demonstrates a whole-part-whole approach to teaching literacy. It uses a learner-generated story of a shared experience and demonstrates activities for developing beginning literacy skills.

"I watched both videos and they are really good!" said Sally. "You can also order DVDs at a nominal cost."

Six more videos are scheduled to post later in 2010.

David Rosen, president of Media Library of Teaching Skills, recently announced the addition of new links to two series of professional development and direct instruction ESOL/ESL videos to www.mlots.org/Other_video.html.

MLoTS (www.mlots.org) is a free digital library of short videos of adult education teachers and their classes or tutorials, intended for use in professional development. The project links to more than 65 videos on topics such as ESL/ESOL, basic literacy, reading, writing, numeracy, adult secondary education, family literacy, and integrating technology.

Steps to success

The Program Management Resource Collection (accessed through www.nifl.gov/lincs/) provides many resources relevant to helping students transition to postsecondary education and training. For example:

- The article Challenges in Assessing for Post-Secondary Readiness examines the major assessments in use today to measure adult learning gains and to determine student placements.
- In Learning Disability: Life after High School, the Technology Transfer Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center provides guidelines and summarizes research on the challenges faced by adults with LD when transitioning to postsecondary schooling and employment.
- The One Step Forward Initiative - Guide to Adult Education for Work: Transforming Adult Education to Build a Skilled Workforce informs practitioners, policymakers, and employers about strategies and practices that transform their adult education programs into effective programs that transition low-skilled adults to work and postsecondary programs.

NIFL also hosts a discussion list focused on transitions to postsecondary education. Visit http://www.nifl.gov/mailman/listinfo/transitions/ to subscribe.
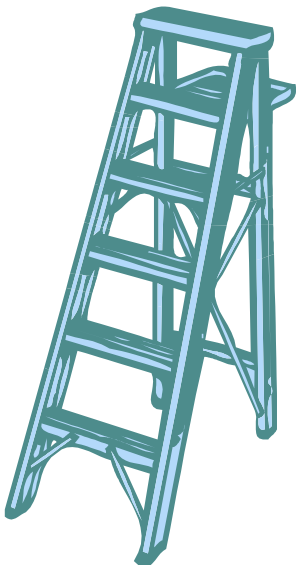
GED® Testing Service rolls out new Initiative

Margaret Patterson previously served as ABE Coordinator at WNC, Associate Director of Adult Education in Kansas, and as a Research Associate at the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning.

The GED credential is no longer the endpoint for many test-takers. Adult educators and examiners nationwide believe it is merely a stepping stone to postsecondary education and career training. GED Testing Service is moving ahead with an Initiative to ensure the GED credential meets the changing national needs for college-ready and career-ready adults.

In a presentation at the March COABE Conference, Associate Director of Public Relations Chris Turner explained, "The GED Initiative is a comprehensive, multi-year initiative intended to increase our ability to reach and serve more individuals who could earn the GED credential. Our end goal is to facilitate pathways to achieve college/career-readiness and earn a sustainable living wage." There are three key components:

1. Development of a GED Test that aligns with the common core national standards and certifies high school equivalency and also college- and career-readiness
2. Development of a multi-platform, broadly accessible academic preparation program
3. Connections and transition services to postsecondary education (PSE) and career opportunities

Also at COABE, Margaret Patterson, director of research at GED® Testing Service presented the results of two studies that explore the pre- and post-testing experience for test-takers:

✪ GED Preparation and GED Test Performance — How Are They Related?
✪ Postsecondary Experiences of GED Candidates

The full studies are available at www.GEDtest.org under Publications & Research.
The powerpoints from the COABE presentations and other resources are available at **www.GEDtest.org/COABE**.